



CENTER OF EXCELLENCE
IN DISASTER MANAGEMENT
& HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE

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**ASIA-PACIFIC DISEASE OUTBREAK
/SURVEILLANCE REPORT**

Week of May 10, 2004

AUSTRALIA

Suspected Norovirus Outbreak Affects Pacific Cruise

Cruise ship operator P and O blamed poor personal hygiene, among some passengers, for a virus outbreak that forced one of its ships to return to Sydney from a Pacific cruise. The company's Pacific Sky luxury liner returned to Sydney on 9 May 2004 after 140 passengers became sick, suffering attacks of nausea, vomiting, and diarrhea during the 11-night cruise. The ship was given the all-clear and left port the same night carrying a new load of passengers, after a team of cleaners, supervised by health officials, scrubbed down the ship. Disgruntled passengers demanded refunds, but the cruise company denied responsibility, saying a passenger probably brought a norovirus on board, and spread it by personal contact. This was the second time the ship had been affected by illness in recent months, with a similar gastrointestinal virus outbreak attacking 200 passengers in December 2003.

Source:

· Yahoo News, Agence France Presse report, May 09, 2004, <http://uk.news.yahoo.com/040509/323/et64u.html>

· Promed Mail, May 11, 2004,

http://www.promedmail.org/pls/askus/f?p=2400:1001:217629165502205429::NO::F2400_P1001_BACK_PAGE,F2400_P1001_PUB_MAIL_ID:1000,25361

BANGLADESH

Hospital Waste Puts Public Health at Risk

Waste generated by Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) puts public health at high risk as it is dumped in the open and onto the road in front of the emergency gate. Experts say hospital waste spreads diseases both airborne and contagious. Poor women and children are more vulnerable because they handle the waste with bare hands, exposing them to contamination with HIV or hepatitis B and other infectious diseases. Two trays of the DMCH incinerator went out of order after it was set up three years ago to burn used gauze, bandages, syringes, blood bags, cotton, plaster, and bed sheets. According to the health ministry, there are more than 700 clinics and hospitals in the city, producing an estimated 300 tons of waste a day, but they do not have enough facilities to burn waste.

Source:

· The Daily Star, May 10, 2004, <http://www.thedailystar.net/2004/05/10/d405102501122.htm>

City at Risk for Epidemics by not Treating Excreta

The capital runs the risk of raging epidemics with its groundwater being increasingly infested with disease organisms from untreated human excreta. The Dhaka Water and Sewerage Authority (Wasa) currently can meet only 10 percent of the city's sewerage service needs. The city's lack of means to treat excreta of its 10 million dwellers has given rise to a very high-risk health and hygiene situation. Recently a number of extremely harmful viruses and bacteria, including escherichia coli, have been detected on several occasions in the groundwater of Old Dhaka. Officials state that if immediate corrective measures are not taken, an alarming rise of water-borne diseases may soon occur and may become epidemics.

Source:

· News From Bangladesh, May 14, 2004, <http://www.bangladesh-web.com/view.php?hidDate=2004-05-14&hidType= is TOP&hidRecord=0000000000000000008362>

70,000 Die of TB in Bangladesh Annually

Nearly 70,000 people die of tuberculosis while 300,000 are affected with the disease in Bangladesh every year despite the facilities being provided for free treatment. The Bangladesh government and SAARC TB Centre are jointly organizing a 10-day Trainers Training Program on TB Management in SAARC region. Some 38 per cent patients, out of a total number in the world, are in the South Asian region. In this region, 3 Million people are newly-affected while 750,000 die annually. A third of world's total population is affected with tuberculosis while it claims one life every 15 seconds (although the disease is curable). Developing countries are in the most vulnerable position with regard to tuberculosis.

Source:

· News From Bangladesh, May 11, 2004, <http://www.bangladesh-web.com/view.php?hidDate=2004-05-11&hidType=NAT&hidRecord=00000000000000000008062>

CHINA

China Announces New Nationwide Measures to Intensify Fight Against AIDS

China has announced a set of new nationwide measures to intensify the fight against HIV/AIDS, including judging local officials' performance by how well they prevent the spread of the disease. The move comes at a time when China's efforts to control the spread of HIV/AIDS has reached a critical period. The disease is rapidly spreading in the country, with certain areas suffering some of the world's highest infection rates. The State Council, China's cabinet, published the measures in a circular to governments at all levels, ordering them to follow the new guidelines. Official statistics indicate there are 840,000 HIV carriers in China, but Chinese and international officials have said the true figure could be much higher, as many carriers do not know they have the disease. The number could reach 10 million by 2010 if urgent measures are not taken, experts warn.

Source:

· Terra Daily, May 09, 2004, <http://www.terradaily.com/2004/040509120616.1vfdoubd.html>

Funeral Guests Hospitalized With Food Poisoning

94 people, including 22 children, were hospitalized in northern China after falling ill at a funeral dinner, probably from salmonella poisoning. About 160 people became ill at the

dinner on 6 May 2004, in the Inner Mongolia village of Zhenghao. Of those hospitalized in the Dalad district on 8 May 2004, 20 were in serious condition with high temperatures and one patient was in a coma. Staff at the hospital said the poisoning was likely the result of eating food contaminated with salmonella bacteria.

Source:

· Yahoo News, UK, May 08, 2004, <http://uk.news.yahoo.com/040508/323/et3nw.html>

· Promed Mail, May 11, 2004,

http://www.promedmail.org/pls/askus/f?p=2400:1001:13487467675894294790::NO::F2400_P1001_BACK_PAGE,F2400_P1001_PUB_MAIL_ID:1000,25353

INDIA

More Cases of Jaundice Reported in Ahmedabad

Despite the Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation (AMC) taking all precautionary measures to prevent the spread of jaundice, 4 more cases were reported in the city on 5 May 2004. Official estimates put the number of jaundice-affected patients in Amraiwadi, Bhaipura, and New Bhavaninagar at 120. AMC officials also suspect that many cases in the eastern part of the city may be unreported, as those afflicted may be going to private practitioners. Efforts are being made to replace damaged pipelines in affected eastern areas, and drinking water is being supplied to these areas by tankers. AMC officials have also contacted NGOs working in these areas to create awareness about personal hygiene among residents. The etiologic agent in this outbreak remains to be identified: hepatitis A virus, hepatitis E virus, both, or another agent entirely.

Source:

· Ahmedabad Newslite, Express News Service, May 06, 2004, <http://cities.expressindia.com/fullstory.php?newsid=83791>

· Promed Mail, May 11, 2004,

http://www.promedmail.org/pls/askus/f?p=2400:1001:17700828401829742594::NO::F2400_P1001_BACK_PAGE,F2400_P1001_PUB_MAIL_ID:1000,25355

Two Encephalitis Deaths Puts Andhra Pradesh on High Alert

Health authorities in Warangal are on high alert after two children died and 6 others developed encephalitis, raising fears of a possible epidemic. Encephalitis is a viral infection of the brain transmitted by culicine mosquitoes that breed in stagnant water, mostly in paddy fields, and proliferate in summer and during the monsoon season. Andhra Pradesh is prone to Japanese encephalitis virus infection, the deadliest form of encephalitis, but in this case a milder strain was diagnosed. Children are most prone to the disease because of their inadequate immunity to it. Symptoms of Japanese Encephalitis are severe headache followed by unconsciousness. Vaccination is the only protection against the infection and has been effective in eradicating encephalitis in 25 countries.

Source:

· New Kerala.com, May 10, 2004, <http://www.newkerala.com/news-daily/news/features.php?action=fullnews&id=15779>

· Promed Mail, May 10, 2004,

http://www.promedmail.org/pls/askus/f?p=2400:1001:4502674641131611439::NO::F2400_P1001_BACK_PAGE,F2400_P1001_PUB_MAIL_ID:1010,25350

INDONESIA

Dengue Fever in Indonesia

From January 1 to April 30 2004, a total of 58,301 cases of dengue fever and dengue hemorrhagic fever (DHF) and 658 deaths have been registered with the Indonesian

Ministry of Health. The case-fatality rate of 1.1 is lower this year than in previous years. Although all 30 provinces have been affected, outbreaks with unusually high numbers of cases have been reported from 293 cities and districts in 17 provinces of the country. As in the 1998 outbreak, Dengue 3 appears to be the predominant circulating virus serotype (37%) in Indonesia this year, but Den-4 (19%) Den-2 and Den-1 are also present. By the end of April the situation has returned to normal with all provinces reporting cases at a low level. Jakarta, Bali and Nusa Tenggara Timur, which were among the most affected provinces, are still being monitored closely.

Source:

· WHO Website, May 11, 2004, http://www.who.int/csr/don/2004_05_11a/en/

JAPAN

11 Men Infected With Hepatitis E Virus After Wild Boar Barbecue

11 elderly men have been infected with hepatitis-E virus after eating wild boar meat at a barbecue party in Nagasaki Prefecture 14 months ago. Doctors suspect the men may have either eaten meat that had not been grilled thoroughly enough to kill the virus or used chopsticks that had touched raw meat. Since hepatitis E virus is similar to hepatitis A virus, the virus is generally killed if sufficiently heated. Infection with hepatitis-E virus has occurred occasionally throughout the country on a smaller scale. In March 2003, 2 people living in Tottori Prefecture suffered from hepatitis-E after eating the raw liver of a wild boar, and one of them died later. Hepatitis E virus is globally distributed and is transmitted enterically as well as between humans and animals. Phylogenetic analysis has identified 5 distinct genotypes (types III and V have been confirmed as present in Japan).

Source:

· Mainichi Shimbun online, May 13, 2004, <http://mdn.mainichi.co.jp/news/20040513p2a00m0dm001000c.html>

· Promed Mail, May 13, 2004,

http://www.promedmail.org/pls/askus/f?p=2400:1001:424240::NO::F2400_P1001_BACK_PAGE,F2400_P1001_PUB_MAIL_ID:1000,25380

PAKISTAN

Suspected Crimean-Congo Hemorrhagic Fever Kills Three in Pakistan

Hospitals in a southwestern Pakistan province have been put on high alert after three people from one family died of suspected Crimean-Congo hemorrhagic fever. The disease is spread by hyalomarginata ticks from livestock, and can be transmitted by infected people through their blood, saliva or droplets from sneezing. Symptoms of the disease include bleeding from the nose and mouth. Laboratory tests on blood samples of the Three dead individuals are pending to confirm the diagnosis. Doctors have been sent to the dead patients' hometown of Qilla Saifullah, about 175 kilometers northeast of Quetta, to investigate if more people have been infected. The disease has occurred in the region before, claiming 38 lives since 2001 in outbreaks at Loralai.

Source:

· Yahoo News Asia, May 11, 2004, <http://asia.news.yahoo.com/040511/ap/d82gefeg2.html>

TAIWAN

Cases of Acute Enterovirus Infection Increasing in Taiwan

Seven cases of acute enterovirus infection have been reported in Taiwan so far in 2004,

all of them in central and southern Taiwan. According to the Health Department's Center for Disease Control, the first 6 cases occurred in central Taiwan, while the latest one was in Tainan County in southern Taiwan at the end of April. Compared with the same period in 2003, which saw 41 serious enterovirus cases in Taiwan, the number so far in 2004 is low. The reason that northern Taiwan has no enterovirus cases might be because this year the weather has been cooler. Health officials don't know why the serious cases of enterovirus infection converged in central Taiwan. The enterovirus responsible for this outbreak is presumed to be enterovirus 71, and these cases are indicative of the seasonal epidemic of hand, foot and mouth disease expected in children in Taiwan at this time of year.

Source:

· Taiwan News.com, Central News Agency, May 07, 2004, <http://www.etaiwannews.com/Taiwan/2004/05/07/1083896012.htm>
· Promed Mail, May 11, 2004, http://www.promedmail.org/pls/askus/f?p=2400:1001:15630720471557047151::NO::F2400_P1001_BACK_PAGE,F2400_P1001_PUB_MAIL_ID:1000,25358

THAILAND

Thailand is Likely Free of Bird Flu

Thailand says it is likely free of bird flu after the last area to suffer an outbreak was declared safe at the end of a 21-day monitoring period. No evidence of the disease has been found on farms, however authorities will continue to monitor the disease for another six months. The avian influenza virus swept through 10 Asian nations earlier this year, killing or forcing the cull of more than 100 million poultry including more than 37 million birds in Thailand. The disease also jumped to people, killing 16 people in Vietnam and eight in Thailand. Thai authorities are now more worried about the birds in the wild rather than on the farms.

Source:

· ABC News, May 14, 2004, http://abcnews.go.com/wire/World/ap20040514_304.html
· Bangkok Post, May 15, 2004, http://www.bangkokpost.com/News/15May2004_news08.php

VIETNAM

Dengue Fever Cases Increase in Vietnam

Nearly 8,800 people were infected with dengue fever in Vietnam in the first four months of this year, an almost 47% increase over the same period in 2003. Fourteen people among the 8,784 affected with the mosquito-borne disease have died. The worst affected provinces were in the southern Mekong Delta region, where moist and humid conditions provide ideal breeding grounds for mosquitoes. The region accounted for more than 93% of cases. Large outbreaks of the virus, which first appeared in Vietnam in 1969, tend to occur every four or five years. Some 383 people died in the last such epidemic in 1998. Characterized by painful joints, fever and a rash, the debilitating symptoms of dengue usually begin within a week of a carrier mosquito's bite and last for 7 days. It also comes in a more deadly hemorrhagic form, often on second infection with another of the 4 types of dengue virus.

Source:

· Utusan Online, May 12, 2004, http://www.utusan.com.my/utusan/content.asp?y=2004&dt=0513&pub=Utusan_Express&sec=Discoveries&pg=di_05.htm

Other World News

WORLD

New WHO Report Highlights Opportunity to Fight HIV/AIDS

WHO has released "The World Health Report 2004 - Changing History," which chronicles the global spread of HIV/AIDS and details the need for linking prevention, treatment, care and support for people living with the virus. It concludes that coordinated efforts now to control this global epidemic, could change the course of history. Already, AIDS has killed more than 20 million people and is the leading cause of death and lost years of productive life for adults aged 15-59 years worldwide. Today, an estimated 34-46 million people are living with HIV/AIDS. Without treatment, all of them will die a premature and painful death. In 2003, three million people died and five million became infected. Almost six million people in developing countries will die in the near future if they do not receive treatment - but only about 400 000 of them were receiving it by the end of 2003. The report is available on the WHO web site, at www.who.int/whr .

Source:

· WHO Website, May 11, 2004, <http://www.who.int/mediacentre/releases/2004/pr33/en/>

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